

The Misawan

JUL - SEP





The Misawan

APR - JUN

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Okinawa Sights

By PO1 Levi Stribling

Almost without exception, every person eventually feels a little itching to get up and go see something interesting, and to change their environment while doing so. While Aomori has a lot of potential to the Sailor stationed here to go experience the Japanese culture and have some adventure while doing so, we can still, fairly, desire a change of scenery. Places like Sendai and Tokyo can be great fun, but there's still a way to leave Japan's mainland, go farther and still pay less than a train ticket to either of those cities. Perhaps one of the most under-utilized methods of travel for people with leave to burn: military hops. Okinawa is one of the places off-island the occasional NALO will make a trip to.



..... Okinawa's climate and scenery is markedly different from the rest of Japan. It is a tropical island surrounded by reef, blue skies and gorgeous, painted clouds. Although poorer than most other Japanese prefectures, Okinawa's



people are relatively laid-back, and the Okinawans have both managed to retain integral pieces of their culture, infuse Japanese culture, and even, in some markets such as music and entertainment, become accustomed to American culture. If you are able to get a NALO to Okinawa (it will be necessary to plan around the scheduling of the NALO, which occurs only sometimes - but when it does there are almost always seats available) you will most likely be landing at Kadena AFB. If you decide to go with a little less risk and fly to Okinawa, you will fly into Naha's airport. Naha, with a population of

approximately 315,000 (for reference, Hachinohe has a population of 215,000) is Okinawa Prefecture's capital and largest city. It is located on the southern tip of the island. There are plenty of things to do in Naha, for instance eat at the Garlic House restaurant or visit Kokusai Dori, home of the very large Makishi Market and countless tourist-oriented shops. Despite the things you can find to do in Naha, it may be a good plan to set yourself up a little more centrally at one of the military bases. Kadena is large, full of amenities, and for the cheapest rooming options, you can stay there at the Navy Gateway Inn

or the Air Force Shogun Inn. Just south of Kadena you will come to a stretch of beach and public park that culminates in the busy American Village, a more expensive option to staying on this part of the island. Although



frequented by US military personnel, American Village is largely marketed to the Japanese as a Starbucks vision of Americana. The area is attractive, flashy and energetic, from the old-town-feel (albeit with the color saturation heavily boosted) shopping plaza near the beach to the gigantic Coca-Cola Ferris wheel. For the shopper, there are scores of shops

which sell a huge range of trinkets, clothing and used American nostalgia. For someone interested in more than shopping, by day there is a public beach and onsen. After sunset (which is best viewed a mile south from the aptly-named Sunset Beach), you can typically find live music of various sorts played outside. This area is also fantastic for sighting the flying fox - a very large species of fruit bat. The fly just after dusk along the main road on the block before the beach, and sometimes hang in the trees low to the ground long enough to photograph. The area is loaded with restaurants, and several of them are worth visiting. On the second floor of the shopping center with the Ferris wheel there is a Thai restaurant tucked in one corner that boasts a sizeable menu. The curries here are delicious and there is a fish on the menu served whole which is delicate and flavorful from head to tail (just ask PO1 Craig for verification of how literally that can be taken.) Elsewhere in American village are numerous decent burger joints, rota sushi places and tepanyaki restaurants. For coffee, tea or other assorted quick beverages, it's best to avoid Starbucks and find the Rachel Coffee located in American village or the Climax Coffee located on the street that leads directly to the

central viewing area of Sunset Beach. Perhaps the most delicious restaurant, at the seaward end of American Village on the second floor of the most colorful collection of buildings to be had, is a Bollywood Dreams Indian restaurant. The walls are plastered with Indian stars and a large TV plays non-stop Bollywood music films, but the restaurant doesn't need the racy atmosphere to keep you on the train to Happy Town - the food will certainly stamp that ticket. Of particular recommendation is the incredible mango curry and the mutton saag curry. Moving north approximately 20 minutes beyond the main gate of Kadena you will come to the town of Yomitan and Cape Zanpa. Cape Zanpa is a stretch of calm, scenic beach, at the end of which you can visit the Zanpa Point Light House and a gigantic shisa guarding a recreational area. Yomitan hosts both glass blowing and pottery kilns, some locations offering interactive glass-blowing and ceramic painting. The heart of crafts here is Yomitan Pottery Village. The pottery village has about ten shops, several large kilns and a few dozen artists who supply the shops with a variety of crafts. The entirety of the village feels relatively remote from its town surroundings



and is perfect for a peaceful morning stroll. You can find huge selections of shisas, dinnerware, tea cups and vases among other things. Some of the items are relatively cheap, but if you're thinking of working on a collection of pottery, plan on bringing a decent amount of extra cash. A few of the places take card, and most of them will package and ship anything you buy to your Japanese address in Misawa should you not wish to pack the delicate goods in your luggage. Halfway into the village on the right-hand side, and just before the shop with a Coke machine in front of it, there is a shop that takes card and serves a few café items, including tasty cocoa (hot or cold) and a mouth-watering plate of noodles good to share for a mid-morning or mid-afternoon snack. All is served in pottery produced by the village, which typically serves to make a patron more inclined to find a reason to purchase something. The hostess is an incredibly sweet



lady who loves to spend time talking to her English-speaking customers, both to learn English and teach Japanese and Okinawan. Just a few minutes north of Yomitan are a couple of places worth mentioning for the more adventurous travelers. You can spend 3000 yen at Forest Adventure Park for several hours of zipline fun. There are two courses to do as you please: a long course mostly for ziplining, and a short adventure course of amusing tasks performed on an adult-sized playground. A few minutes down the road from Forest Adventure Park is the beautiful



Maida Point, a great spot for snorkeling or diving. There's a small beach to the left for those wishing to sun, and a few caves to swim in, climb rocks or do shallow dives. To the right is a stairway that descends to the water at the edge of a rocky shoreline. The fish are bold, numerous and likely to surround you expecting to be fed. There is also a pretty large cave you can swim into if you swim to the right. For those seeking night life, there are three great hotspots, depending on your nature and the kind of night you'd like to have out. For those wanting to escape the American scene, head to downtown Naha. You'll incur a costlier cab ride, but if you're looking for night clubs, this is your best option in Okinawa. For those looking for a rowdier mix of Americans and Japanese, look no further than Gate Two Street immediately outside Kadena. This is where you'll find plenty of live music, from Okinawan and American heavy metal at Fujiyama's

to bluesy folk covers at First Chance to karaoke at multiple locations. There are plenty of izakayas and street meat for the late-night snacker, and the drinks coupled with the ride (or walk) back to base is the cheapest option for a night out. A moderate blend of the two previous places, the sea wall outside Kadena's Gate One offers, for the most part, a more reserved atmosphere. The drinks are pricier, but the food is good and the rooms are usually lively but not overcrowded. On the second floor of a building toward the northern end of the sea wall, check out Transit Café for a great fusion meal, or head down to the complete opposite end to try one of two very good sushi restaurants. No matter what else you do with your time while stationed in Japan, it is important that you take opportunities while on this side of the world to explore what you can. There is so much to do for a motivated person, and in the case of traveling to Okinawa, the potential for the experience is right at your fingertips.



Giving Miyako a Make-over By PO1 Levi Stribling

“People are forgetting that so many lives are still recovering and it was fulfilling to let these people know we haven’t forgotten, we still care, and we are still here to help.”



On two separate occasions in July 2011 volunteer Sailors from NIOC Misawa journeyed south to provide relief support to a small town. When the mission announcement came through, NIOC Sailors answered the call sending two groups of hard-working Sailors on a four-hour journey south to Miyako City. The volunteers, unsure of what was to be expected of them, were ready to take on the worst to bring any sort of relief to the shattered city. Earlier this year, the fishing town of over 57,000 was crushed by the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami, leaving many unable to return to their homes. The village lost 97% of its fishing boats, leaving the town which depends heavily on the fishing industry to support itself. Each of the two-day



missions included long hours of debris removal, landscaping assistance, appliance transportation, and general reorganization. The recovery mission is one the command was happy to be a part of as it expedited the recovery of the town’s livelihood in the wake of the disaster. “It is quite surreal to see all the damage and destruction that is still so prevalent in many areas in Japan. People are forgetting that so many lives are still recovering and it was fulfilling to let these people know we haven’t forgotten, we still care, and we are still here to help.” -Petty Officer Gaustad Petty Officer Gaustad was only one of several NIOC Sailors who woke up before the sunrise to join their counterparts from Naval Air Facility Misawa for the two-day mission. The group loaded up in a van and took a four-hour

drive south along the Japanese coast before arriving at their destination. The first day on location included residential drainage cleaning and sand-bag filling. All hands did their part and even when the work area was hit with a sudden bout of rain they forged ahead. The following morning found the Sailors congregating with Japanese volunteer workers for guided morning exercises before heading out to their next assignment. The day was a long one focused on clearing out long stretches of trenches that had been filled with dirt. The team of Sailors worked all day, took a lunch break with their Japanese counterparts, and finished up smartly. After the mission was over, the two forces of volunteers came together for what seemed like several minutes



of group photos. Several members of one Japanese volunteer group even joined the Sailors in a round of push-ups symbolizing their strength and resolve to get the country back on its feet. “It makes you feel immensely proud to know that you and your fellow service members are making a direct impact on the daily lives of so many people. Being a part of the effort to aid civilians, from Misawa to Miyako, was more fulfilling and rewarding than I could have hoped.” -Petty Officer Taylor The Sailors were sent back home with gracious bows of appreciation and sincere wishes for a safe return trip. It was more of an experience that they could have asked for and a job well done for NIOC Misawa.

NIOC Misawa Sailors Raise Money For NSW Foundation

By Senior Chief Leah Strebin

On 1 October 2011, residents of Misawa Air Base, Japan participated in a 24 hour run to help raise money for the NSW Foundation and support the families of the 30 servicemen who were killed in the crash of a CH-47 CHINOOK helicopter on 6 August 2011 in Afghanistan. The idea to raise money to support the foundation was the brainchild of two NIOC Sailors (who wish to remain anonymous). One of the Sailors father was a member of DEVGRU for many years, so he said that when he heard about the helicopter crash, he was devastated. "The Command is more than a workplace, it's a family. I had to do something to help. We lost a group of the most elite war-fighters on the planet, the least we could do is make sure that their families were taken care of in this time of hardship". Being half-way around the world meant that this Sailor couldn't participate in any events in the United States, so he decided to organize an event in Misawa. His one goal was to raise money and draw attention to the NSW Foundation, whose mission is "to provide immediate and ongoing support and assistance to the Naval Special Warfare community and their families". After weeks of planning, organizing, and enlisting the support and help of not only their shipmates at NIOC but from all the Command's on Misawa Air Base, the participants gathered at the high school track at midnight. After opening remarks from Chaplain Ames, and from LT



"We lost a group of the most elite war-fighters on the planet, the least we could do is make sure that their families were taken care of in this time of hardship"

Brandy Grossi, who served with PO1 Michael Strange, who was lost in the crash, the runners started on a 24 hour mission on a cold and rainy Misawa night. Some were on teams, some had made the choice to continue as long as they could during the 24 hours. PO2 Ezekiel Troutman, whose friend was killed in Afghanistan in 2007 said "I know how much his family had to go through with everything from paying for his funeral to dealing with the loss of their son. During the procession to his funeral the streets of our city were lined with people and in talking to his parents the one thing that helped them the most was seeing how many people showed up to show their support for his family and even though they didn't know a quarter of the people that were there it's what helped them the most. The special forces are the people that the majority of the nation will never know what they sacrifice for people they will most likely never meet, never hear a good job or even just a thank you and anytime there's a chance to bring to light how much they put on the line for us is a good time for ALL of us to show how much we appreciate the silent warriors". In the end, over 200 participants helped to raise over \$6,000 for the foundation. "People really understand the magnitude of this loss, and in this time of hardship, the base has joined hands regardless of service and did what needed to be done to take care of the families of our fallen heroes".

Getting Equestrian in Northern Japan

By PO1 Levi Stribling



When most people think of Japan, horses just aren't on the list. There are, however, a few places here where horses get their own piece of the Orient. One such nook is in Japan's Aomori Prefecture where wild horses roam freely, bask in the summer sun, and graze all-day-long. It's a place where humans are not just welcome, but treated as old friends. Shiryazaki (㊦㊦㊦㊦㊦㊦ - Cape Shiriya) is a little-known cape at the tip of the Shimokita Peninsula in Northern Japan. This idyllic corner of the country is the second northern-most point of Honshu. It peeks out into the Pacific on the east and into the agricultural hub of Hokkaido in the north. It's the one place in Northern Japan where herds of wild horses have been given their own plot of land upon which to trot, gallop, canter, and neigh to their heart's content. The Japanese term for these equine beasts is 'kandachime' (㊦㊦㊦㊦) - literally, 'horses that stand in the cold.' If you were to visit them in the winter, you would know why. The horses stand still in frozen fields amid snowfalls and harsh temperatures reaching -30 degrees. After all it is their home, and they're there year round. Once you pull in and park, you'll notice



one thing about the breed, it's big. But, although they're considered wild, most visitors are surprised at their docility. All you need are a bag or two of carrots and a camera and you're in for a full day. Established in the umbrage of a nineteenth-century lighthouse (Tohoku's first), the 'horse ranch' at Cape Shiriya gives its visitors a pacifying view of the Pacific. Waves crash white at the promontory's base and birds pass by sporadically looking for their next meal. If you find yourself tiring of feeding and petting the natives, you may want to step away for a moment to fill yourself with the sights and sounds of where you are. You can either grab a bite at one of the two snack shops there or pack a lunch in advance for a picnic down by the water. But you don't have to wait to get there to enjoy yourself as the drive north from Misawa is

truly one of the treasures of the voyage. The seldom-travelled roads wend through small fishing villages and miles of natural forest as you trace the Pacific coast northward. The scenery is filled with brilliant colors, the air is fresh, and there are no lines. The directions are easy enough: Exit POL Gate and make a left at the first Lawson's. Go all the way to the coast (this puts you on Highway 338 - it follows the Pacific coast). Head north and let the blue highway signs do the rest. Cape Shiriya is not a place most people know of, but now you do and it's well worth the drive and experience. It's a great place for a day trip and to have lunch with some old friends.



Warui Kedo – Apologizing in the Native Tongue

By PO1 Levi Stribling

So, picture this. Imagine you're at your favorite ramen shop sitting waiting a steamy sapid bowl of Sesame Garlic Charsiu ramen and the waiter brings over a tray of cheese rolls and gyu-don (beef and rice bowl). Although good, you are now in a bind. It's not what you ordered. How do you go about bringing up that the waiter had made a mistake? Scenario 2: You're sitting on the bullet train (J: 新幹線) and a gentleman approaches you with tickets in his hand indicating that you're sitting in his seat. How do you go about apologizing and resolving the situation? 'Oh, that's easy,' you say. 'One quick sumimasen and everything's good.' Well, not necessarily. The truth is there are no black and white rules to apologizing in Japanese, but there's certainly not just one expression that covers it. Basically, here's how it works - Sumimasen (すみません) by itself carries the English equivalent of 'excuse me.' Whether it be getting someone's attention - as in, "Excuse me, may I have a little more water?" (すみません、おみずをもちよつとください。) or after bumping into someone, it's what you use to say a casual 'excuse me.' The phrase can also mean 'thank you', but that's a discussion for another time. . . .

. . . . Gomen nasai (ごめんなさい), on the other hand, is a very distinct apology - used when something is your fault and you need to recognize it, as in, "Oh, I'm sorry for showing up late." (おそくなって、ごめんなさい。) The confusion for many may come about with the term 'sumimasen deshita.' (the past tense of sumimasen) - which, very much like gomen nasai, means 'I'm sorry.' So, in brief, to say 'excuse me', use sumimasen. For 'I'm sorry,' it's gomen nasai or sumimasen deshita. How about some examples? Examples: Ready? You are at a festival and, while taking photographs of the touring floats, your shoulders bump into an older woman carrying her grandson. What do you say? You're helping an acquaintance carry a tray of homemade onigiri (rice balls) and you slip and drop the tray all over the lawn. What do you say? You've forgotten to leave your car key for the towing company. When they call back later wondering what happened, what do you say? Remember, the rules aren't fast and hard. In fact, most of the time there is no black and white panacea for all apology issues in Japanese. These are just two examples of a larger selection.

What's the best way to solidify them for yourself and keep from having to re-learn them? Practice makes perfect. Keep using them, imprinting them into your mind. Yes, keep apologizing. It makes you look humble in the long run and improves your Japanese at the same time. And here I am at the end of this article and I haven't really given you any rules on how to lock this down. What should I say?

WHERE IS IT?



How often do you get out and about? If you come across this location in the vicinity of Misawa, snap a photo of something in the same area and send it, along with your name, to misawapao@gmail.com. The best submitted photo will be selected for print in next quarter's edition along with a new challenge.

Hail & Farewell

HAILS

CPO Hopi Jagger
PO1 Michael Cook
PO1 Michael Schaffner
PO2 Axon Bonsey
PO2 Travis Leonard
PO2 Jason Stone
PO3 Tyler Sato
SN Joseph Felice
SN Dylan Hand
SN Jordan Wineland

FAREWELLS

CPO Merrill Tilley
PO1 Eric Famanas
PO1 Frank Jennings
PO1 April Mule
PO2 Michael Deenihan
PO2 Kari Gaustad
PO2 Meliessa Kelley
PO2 Charles Reed
PO3 Timothy Krieger
PO3 Carmen Wood